

# Gabby

The Gabby Guy joins an elite group for a first-time event, then braves the weather—yet again—to attend a truly inspiring affair for a group of dedicated mentors.

BY MIKE DODSON

A Photo Finish to Start

**H**eather Campbell Coyle, curator of American Art for the Delaware Art Museum, looked at an image of a bullet piercing an apple. “It’s how they make apple sauce at MIT,” she said.

The first meeting of the new Renaissance Social Group coincided with the museum’s “Faster Than The Eye Can See: Photographs by Harold Edgerton.” The exhibit featured 18 original prints of ultra high-speed pre-digital photographs. Subjects included the frozen flight of a hummingbird and the static splashdown of a drop of milk, which Edgerton labored for 25 years to catch perfectly. “Don’t make me out to be an artist,” the late Edgerton once said. “I am an engineer,” whose images have appeared in publications such as *Life* and *National Geographic* and have been shown frequently at the Museum of Modern Art.

To refresh community involvement and membership support, museum director Danielle Rice, Renaissance chair Joan Sharp, director of development Susan Zellner and PR manager Dennis Lawson are hosting monthly gatherings to promote art appreciation through dialogue, discovery, cocktails and nibbles. The number of attendees will be kept “intimate and manageable,” said Sharp, who was looking sharp in ultrasuede slacks and sassy Prada slingbacks.

The next Renaissance Social Group at Delaware Art Museum will be May 20 in the Copeland Sculpture Garden (no stilettos, ladies) and will pair art and wine. “If the Boteros were still here on loan, we’d probably have paired them with a big, full-bodied, plump, South American red—a Malbec maybe,” said Campbell Coyle. Lucky attendees will likely be treated to the namesake Copelands’ own appellation, Bouchaine of Napa Valley. Be smart and reserve soon. Contact Heather Anderson ([handerson@delart.org](mailto:handerson@delart.org)) pronto.

The first RSGers included art lover Jan Jessup, who visits the museum often to find inspiration for her Wilmington-based home textiles and furnishings business. “This museum should be a social center,” Jan told us. “The community needs a place to develop and secure relationships—and it’s a lot closer than South Africa.” Jan recently returned from a “fantasy trip” to South Africa, where she found plenty of inspiration for animal prints “up close and very personal.”

Mrs. Lee Kallos also got personal. "People need to know it's their museum to participate and party in," Lee said. "It's not some foreboding, stodgy place." Trust us: Lee, an always stylish Delebrity decorator, knows from not stodgy. She recently counseled another Delebrity, Pulitzer-nominated photographer Jim Graham, on wall color.

The group of 50 guests included chartreuse-chemised committee member Tara Quinn and bijoued Blue Streak Gallery owner Ellen Bartholomaus. Graham, the guest artist and lecturer, had all rapt with his attempt to re-create an elusive Edgerton droplet with splashback crown. Puncturing a plastic bag of water using a pin, Jim released droplets into a brownie pan as a digital camera displayed the process on a large screen, to much oohing and aahing from the audience. Jim managed to snag an excellent Edgertonesque splash on only the third attempt. Impressed photophiles included Renaissance member Christopher Gervais and volunteer docents Susan Kreshtool and Becky Rosen, who said, "My middle school group kids would love this," as did Penny Ashford, who was "going home to try it."

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## Mentoring Megastars

The party swung, Sinatra fans swooned, and the weather monsooned. Volunteers, committee members and directors defied a nasty nor'east deluge to attend Connecting Generations' annual fundraising celebration, Swing Into Spring (formerly Jazz In January) at the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts. Why the DCCA? "Because it's cool," said Connecting Generations board member Anne Scott. "Also because it's city-based, a neutral ground for our members and guests, culturally and geographically, and less intimidating than an exclusive private country club. Been there. Done that."

We also asked Anne about the entertainment committee's choice of Sinatra impersonator Sean Reilly, aka Seanatra, and keyboardist John Southard. As it turns out, many of the board members had seen Sean and John perform, usually at their standing gig at Union City Grille. "They were raving about him, them," Scott said.

The cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and decorations were incentive enough to brave the storm, but I don't think anything would have kept away the proud friends and relatives of award-winner Amanda Kimball. Amanda is a mentor of 10 years and program coordinator at Lancashire Elementary School. There to support her were her husband, Todd Kimball, her mother, Findlay Kendrick, and her aunt, Amy Shields. "I'm absolutely proud," gushed Todd. "She has done a terrific job." Mrs. Kendrick treated everyone to fists full of raffle tickets for a weekend in Lewes. "Are you kidding?" she said. "Even if it had been more snow I'd have been here. I'm so proud." Auntie Amy was the most sentimental of the trio. "Amanda attaches meaning from her heart to her mentoring projects," she said. "The love comes naturally from her." Group awwwww.

We didn't get a chance to meet the other five: Dolores Sebastian, nine years at Townsend Elementary; Marc Ward, five years at Shue-Medill Middle School; Indian River School District program coordinator Ivan Neal; guidance counselor Nathan Palkovitz, who oversees 450 mentors at Linden Hill Elementary; and Allan Coletta, director of engineering for Siemens Healthcare. Allan is a mentor at Brader Elementary.

There were too many awards to mention in this brief space, but one of note: the 11th annual Robert A. Kasey Jr. Lifetime Achievement Award, which was bestowed upon retired educator Maurice Pritchett. Mr. Pritchett is no stranger to plaudits, having received a call from Bill Clinton and a visit from George W. Bush after being named the state's top principal. "Roll up your sleeves and help," said Mr. Pritchett, a mentor to 9-year-old Abdullah at Bancroft Elementary. "Every day someone in the school should tell the students that they are loved. My dream is that they'll come back and help someone else the same way."

Among those gathered to honor Mr. Pritchett were Congressman Mike Castle and wife Jane. They'd had a full day, bouncing from the high school basketball championship to The Irish Culture Club to a VFW dinner in Dover to a party at the home of Republican State Committee vice chair Cathy Murray. Whew.

The Kasey award is represented by a 15-inch tall bronze statuette of a man reading to a young girl, modeled by sculptor Molly Sanger Carpenter. Any likeness to Connecting Generations founder Robert A. Kasey—the

man's spectacles, left-handedness and cardigan—resulted from “divine intervention,” said Kasey's adult children, Gail, Dave and George Kasey. The three explained that, upon his retirement from the DuPont Company, their father was looking for something meaningful to do when he suddenly realized that his own grandchildren could benefit by spending some good ol' fashioned quality time with grandpa and vice versa. Starting with simple, even mundane tasks like shucking corn, the family's life was enriched. It was a model that could work on a larger scale—and it has. Thanks, Bob. Ciao for now.

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First State Fashion Plate

**The Belles and Beaus of the Balls**

